

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

Hearing Date: March 18, 2021 8:00 AM

Printed on: March 22, 2021 4:34 PM

COMMENTS FOR: HB 1725

---

Kellye Duncan

self

San Angelo, TX

Dear Committee members,

Election integrity is vital to every community & county across our great state regardless of party preference. We must maintain our voter ID laws and have other means to maintain the truth in all elections. If we must show an ID to purchase beer, wine, alcohol, tobacco, BOARD AN AIRPLANE, cash a check or any other multiple times, we must prove who we are when voting. I would hate to learn that my mother had voted - she has been dead since 1997. I would hate to learn that my neighbor had voted even though he is not a registered voter. Please review with your heart the logical and legal methods to ensure our elections are true and fair. Thank you for your service to our great state of Texas!

---

Robert Scott

Self - Retired

Colleyville, TX

I object to this bill as a limitation to voting rights and application of more open elections. This practice is in place in a number of states and there have been no documented cases of unwelcome outcomes (including fraud). I encourage extension and openness in voting registration and voting practices. When more Texans vote, democracy wins.

---

Ronald Smith, Mr

Self

Boerne, TX

In the 2020 election, both my wife and I elected to hand deliver to our county election office our mail in ballot. We both wanted to make sure that our ballot was delivered in person since we had reservations about the postal system. The election official asked for our drivers license which they matched to the printed ballot which had our names. They recorded our name and mail in ballot ID and then we had to sign the sealed ballot in their presence. We then turned the ballot to them. This was a safe and secure way to vote. I see no reason why hand delivery of a mail in ballot should be eliminated so we strongly oppose HB 1725.

---

James Keown

Retired

Garden Ridge, TX

To prohibit this option is a slap to democracy. I have a hard time getting my medicine through the mail in a timely manner so to not allow a person to hand deliver their ballot to their county office is sin. Why are Republicans so against democracy? The cornerstone of a great democracy is making it easier for its citizens to participate in elections via the vote. Instead Republicans are so power hungry, this bill is nothing more than an attempt for ONE PARTY to maintain it grip on POWER. Is there someone on this committee or in the House that has some solid proof that we have wide spread voting violations in Texas or anywhere else? Please show me! This and the other bills before this body is nothing short of voter suppression directed

towards minorities. As the lawyer for the Republican party in AZ argued before the Supreme court, the more people that vote the less likely Republicans will win. This has nothing to do with people voting but EVERYTHING to do with Republican policies. The policies are NOT pro-people and meeting the needs of common people.

One of the great commands in the Bible is Love your neighbor as yourself. This bill shouts "Screw your neighbor. Lets stay in power and dictate what we want people to have".

I conclude with this. At some point Republicans will NOT be in power. You should pray that the new "majority" treat you better than you are treating and attempting to treat the current "minority" with this bill.

Thanks for your consideration.

---

Virginia Fredricks

Self

Austin, TX

I am writing to express my strong opposition to this bill. Making voting harder should not be what the legislature should be doing- making voting more accessible should be the focus. I am not sure why no in person drop off hurts anyone- and only helps.

---

Christina Huckaba, Mrs.

Self Retired Teacher

Boerne, TX

I opposes this bill.

---

Shakti Biskamp, Mrs.

none

Coppell, TX

Could not find HB1127. Can the person who is in question also be notified, as they may be able to have recourse and show the needed paperwork that they are in fact a citizen. Regarding SB 155, please have the voters registrar's office notify whoever is being disqualified so they will have time to rectify the situation. Some mention of that should be made. Regarind HB25, all those who automatically quality should defiitely be sent mail in ballots, especially over 65, since many of these folks don't use computers or even have them, and it is espeically difficult to get all the paperwork done! Regarding HB1382, there needs to be someone to call as well as online to check the status of a person's ballot as many older people cannot deal with a computer, as well as handicapped people. Regarding HB 1725, if safety and honesty is truly desire, every person should have a right to drop his/her ballot off to wherever she/he feels it will be duly properly counted.

---

Diana Duron

Self clinical social worker

El paso, TX

This bill I disagree- over 65 years if weather and ability to vote in person I will take my mail in ballot and surrender to be able to vote in person to make certain my vote is counted and the receipt is verified

---

John Cobarruvias

Self

Houston, TX

The Honorable Dennis Paul  
P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, Texas 78768  
Reference HB1725

Representative Paul,

The State is best served by two strong political parties that compete in the elections. As a republican I am sure you value fair competition. House Bill 1725 will help your party become competitive again.

Your party is slowly losing touch with Texans becoming the party of the extreme far right catering to white nationalists, racists, and various other deplorables. Your party has lost its moral compass. It's lost its purpose with reckless spending, constant racist dog whistles, hypocrisy, guns on demand, and leaving Texans in the dark and in the cold, literally. Your party is going to begin to lose in upcoming elections. You must do something to help you and your party stay in power. HB1725 will actually help the State by keeping your party viable and in office.

Your party will never return to the party of Ronald Reagan so something must be done in order to stay in power. The only way for you to do so is to make it harder for people to vote you out of office by restricting access to voting. HB1725 does just that by removing the ability for one to drop off a ballot in a secure location. There are no studies that show dropping off a ballot is not secure or can be manipulated or contributes to any issues with "voting integrity" but that shouldn't stop you because your party needs it. The fewer people who vote the better your chances of staying in office.

So in order to stay in office you must do everything you possibly can to restrict voter registrations and make it harder to vote. HB1725 will do just that and keep your party viable. Let those who are disabled, sick, elderly, and those who have lost faith in the USPS, stand in long lines and sweat like a pig to vote like everyone else. Also you might want to make it unlawful to allow them to sit down in line, eat, or drink anything. And make it unlawful to have an umbrella to provide shade in the sun on a hot day. ,

John Cobarruvias  
14646 Cardinal Creek Ct  
Houston, Texas 77062  
281-536-2457

---

Sylvia Campbell, Ms.

self, retired

The Woodlands, TX

HB 1725 - Some people do not want to rely on the postal service or hire another form of delivery for their Ballot by Mail. There is no reason that in-person delivery cannot be done in a safe and secure manner.

---

Larry Ringler  
Self-retired  
Portland, TX

I fully support this bill, which will require a voter's signature matches the signature on all relevant documents and envelopes. Please vote for this bill.

---

DONNA EYLES

Self

CORPUS CHRISTI, TX

This bill is to remove the ability to deliver a ballot in person by the [supposedly] actual voter. I would agree with this since the Clerk's office (where the ballot would be delivered) is not the authority for signature verification against whatever ID is provided. (Only voting clerks/judges/ballot board are allowed to do signature verifications.) This iffy procedure should be removed to prevent ballot harvesting/voter fraud.

Please vote YES for HB 1725.

---

Kirk Pate, Mr.

Self

Flatonia, TX

This voter opposes HB1725 as frivolous. Voters' confidence was shaken by radical Republican extremists slow-walking delivery of the mail by the USPS. So, why would voters like to retain the option of hand delivering a completed mail-in ballot? To preserve that option in the event that anyone attempts to impede the timely delivery of the US mail.

---

Eric Mann

Self

Dallas, TX

oppose.

---

Elizabeth Andrews

self homemaker

Austin, TX

I oppose House Bill 25. It would prohibit counties from distributing unsolicited vote by mail applications even to voters over 65, who automatically qualify.

---

Cathy Murphree

self

Richardson, TX

I oppose HB 1725.;

I currently qualify for mail-in voting since I am over 65. Recently, I have experienced First Class US mail deliveries of two week plus. With my loss of confidence in US Mail, the only way I would consider voting via mail-in voting would be if I had the option of hand-delivering my ballot to my Dallas County clerk.

I actually believe there should be a great number of locations where mail-in ballots can be hand-delivered, not fewer.

I also do not see how eliminating this option makes elections more secure. It does, however, make voting more difficult.

---

scott mesmer

self

corpus christi, TX

I am against mail in ballots and believe in a strong voter process no matter how a vote is collected and processed One legitimate vote per one legitimate citizen. Please vote for HB 1725

---

Julie Garcia

self

Corpus Christi, TX

Comparing signatures is important to determine fraud. This is another security we can add to our election integrity. Any method to help us regain faith and confidence will help to restore faith. Please vote for HB 1725.

---

Larry Ringler

Self-retired

Portland, TX

I support HB 1725, which clarifies ballot delivery procedure. I urge passage of this bill. Thank you.

---

Eileen Chapman

Self Retired

Lumberton, TX

Please support this bill

---

Cinde Weatherby, Voting Rights/Election Law Ch.

League of Women Voters of Texas

Austin, TX

Opposition to HB 1725

-- LWVTX opposes HB 1725. During the 2020 election, we heard from many anxious voters who wanted to make sure their ballots were counted. Some had received ballots by mail and feared their voted ballots would not reach the county offices in time to be counted. They mostly feared the postal service would be unable to return them. The additional option for hand-delivering their ballots to their election officials was a great relief to these voters. Whatever the future circumstances, be it a similar or continued health pandemic, a postal strike or slowdown, or extreme weather, voters desire and want to keep the option of convenient hand-delivery of their vote by mail ballot. HB 1725 would deny voters that option without basis.

---

Cynthia Gaskill

Self

Magnolia, TX

I am in support of HB 1725. Mail in Ballots are intended for people who typically are impeded from voting in person (either physically or because they are located out of the county) during an election. It makes sense that those who NEED to use mail in voting either mail in their vote, or use another carrier as detailed in HB 1725. Thank you for your time.

Valerie Street

Texas Progressive Action Network

Austin, TX

On behalf of Texas Progressive Action Network, I urge members of the committee to oppose HB 1725. Under this bill, there would be no permissible alternative to delivery of ballot by mail such as in-person delivery to an elections office. Texans have so far been able to drop off their in-person ballot to county clerk offices on Election Day. During the 2020 General Election, and during unprecedented times because of the COVID crisis, that policy was expanded to allow voters extended time to drop off their in-person ballot. It was a necessary measure and helped many Texas voters feel more confident that they wouldn't miss their opportunity to vote amidst both a pandemic and United States Postal Service delivery delays. We urge committee members to consider keeping that expansion and to maintain in-person delivery as a viable method for ballot by mail so that Texas voters can be assured that they have more than one opportunity to get their ballot turned in on time.

---

Penny Bradshaw, resident

Self/retired

The Woodlands, TX

This amendment to the Election Code makes no sense to me. Other than trying to confuse voters about hand delivery of mail in ballots, I see no reason for this change. My belief is that Republicans in this state do not like ballot drop boxes and in person delivery because they believe that Democrats tend to take advantage of these conveniences in larger numbers. What our Republican state leaders did during the 2020 election - limiting drop off locations for mail in ballots in Harris County so as to make it more difficult for residents to cast their ballots is unconscionable, especially during a pandemic. This is just one more blatant example of voter suppression. As a resident of Texas, I absolutely oppose the passage of this bill. Whatever happened to our legislators working to represent the people who elected them and trusted them to uphold their voting rights?

---

Linda Maldonado

Self/Retired

San Antonio, TX

I oppose this bill. Many voters hand carry their mail ballots to the elections office. Now their ballots will not be counted. This is purposeful disenfranchisement of voters. What specific harm is being done by hand delivering a ballot to the elections office? This is purposeful disenfranchisement of voters.

---

Jesse Suarez

Rabalais I&E Constructors

Corpus Christi, TX

We dont need extra people or organizations not qualified to deliver mail in ballots like Facebook drop boxes. I saw videos online of suspicious looking people in plain clothes stuffing ballots from a Zuckerberg drop box into back packs for transport. They didnt even wear uniforms to give the appearance of legitimacy. I dont care for mail in ballots but if they must be used lets keep it simple and limit the delivery to only mail or contract carriers and void ballots from any other source. Please vote yes on HB1725.

---

Angelika Hoehner

Self Retired

TX, TX

I am writing to oppose HB 1725 as it strikes down the opportunity for a registered voter to deliver their mail-in ballot directly and in person to the Elections Office. This appears to be one step toward an all mail-in ballot procedure. I have had personal experiences where mail that I posted is not delivered on time, making me question the restrictions in this bill. Furthermore, as a senior citizen, I may wish to request a mail-in ballot for my reading in the comfort of my home, rather than standing over a voting machine. This allows me time to consider my choices prior to voting. Allowing me to submit my ballot directly to the Elections Office, after showing proper identification, further provides me with the confidence that my vote will be counted.

---

Arthur Simon

self, artist

Austin, TX

I oppose this bill because voters should retain the option of delivering a mail ballot in person.

---

Pamela Oglesby

None

Cedar Park, TX

There are already restrictions on in-person delivery of ballots and no additional restrictions are needed. My friend tried to hand deliver her father's ballot when her father was 99 years old confined in a nursing home and it was refused because the current restrictions require that the voter has to deliver it themselves and show their ID.

---

Reuben Leslie

12203 Antoinette place

Austin, TX

I oppose this bill because casting a completed ballot-by-mail at a curbside drop-off is an efficient, safe, and sure way to cast a ballot for voters who have disabilities or are elderly. Prohibiting that drop-off where it is allowed now would make voting less efficient, safe and sure, particularly for voters in areas where mail delivery near deadlines is unreliable, as was the case for many in the last general election. Please do not make it harder for voters to vote!

---

Carla Birk

self

Leander, TX

I support tightening the security of returned mail ballots. I recommend adding that the ballot by mail or courier must be delivered to the clerk directly by an employee of the USPS or courier and prohibit county employees or others from retrieving the mailed ballots from the USPS or other location. I have observed a Travis County employee retrieve bins of mailed ballots alone many times over the years. It breaks the chain of custody as intended in the law.

IF in-person delivery is allowed, the law needs to ensure ID check and sign-in as would be done at a polling place to verify that it is returned by the VOTER as required in the law. Poll watchers should be allowed to observe in-person ballot delivery if that method is continued. My suggestions are to protect the VOTER's right for their ballot to be counted when legally cast without coercion or interference.

Amanda Reed  
Represent Us Texas  
Frisco, TX

Dear Elections Committee,

Thank you for reading our comments. I am writing to oppose HB 1725. In the past, Texas has been a very difficult state to vote in. I am disappointed to see bills that are aimed towards making the process even more difficult, even though Texas has done a wonderful job of keeping their elections free of fraud. Mail-in-voting was safely used in last year's election by voters from each political party. Allowing voters flexibility in how they return their mail-in-ballots can be done securely and can relieve a bit of pressure on our postal system as well as give voters reassurance that their ballot has been safely delivered.

I hope that in the next few years Texas becomes a beacon for safe and effective voting practices that encourage incredible voter turnout. We're a growing and innovative state and we'll be better when all our citizens can safely and effectively participate.

Thank you,

Amanda Reed

---

Bianca Gracia, Mrs  
Latinos for America First, Latinos for Trump, Lideres de la Comunidad, and Americanos Conservative United  
Pasadena, TX

Our organization of over 10k members and 2k Hispanic Evangelicals support this bill.

---

Carol Edwards  
self / retired  
AUstin, TX

I think we should be able to deliver OUR OWN ballots in person. I have had so many problems with my own mail delivery by an ever changing group of postal carriers, I no longer trust the USPS?? Sometimes my mail comes at 9 a.m., and sometimes as late as 6 p.m. Often I get mail addressed to other people & sometimes my own mail is mis-delivered & returned to me. Our mail service is broken. DON'T BREAK OUR VOTING SYSTEM TOO??

---

Bianca Gracia, Mrs  
Latinos for America First, Latinos for Trump, Lideres de la Comunidad, and Americanos Conservative United  
Pasadena, TX

Our organization of over 10k members and 2k Hispanic Evangelicals support this bill.

---

Jennifer Lane  
Self  
Denton, TX



This is a terrible bill. I oppose it. Because Texas uses "Received" by 5:00 pm the day after Election Day for mail-in ballots, it is unreasonable to deny people the right to use ballot drop off on Election Day instead of relying on the mail, which we have seen recently is vulnerable to delays. This is a clear suppression bill and should be voted down. I also noticed that the video broadcast of the meeting stopped working during the testimony on this bill.

---

Theresa Werth

Self

Leander, TX

The ability to delivery a ballot in person assisted with the mail delay issues as well as drop box being too full and or vandalized. All voters should be allowed to submit their ballot in person if they so chose. This process should not be prohibited.

---

Zenobia Joseph

Self

Austin, TX

I oppose HB 1725. There is no language acknowledging U.S. Postal Service delayed delivery due to no fault of the voter. In a Google search for "voting by mail USPS slow delivery," CBS reported November 2, 2020: "On election eve, the U.S. Postal Service is struggling to deliver." November 2, 2020 New York Times also reported, "Some Regions Still Experience Slow Delivery of Mail Ballots." Having the option to drop off the ballot at the Main Election Office to a designated locked box should uniformly ensure all eligible voters are enfranchised—able to vote. An unintended consequence of HB 1725 would be disenfranchisement of voters who seek to submit a "marked ballot voted under this chapter [which] must be returned to the early voting clerk in the official carrier envelope."

---

Kathy Turner

self, retired

McGregor, TX

Would like to make sure there is a definition of common or contract carrier in law. Support using mail by USPS for mail-in ballots. This would make the process equitable for those voters who truly need to vote by mail because they are out of town, especially those out of state or country, such as the military, with those voting by mail who are not out of town, state, or country.

---

Julia Dahlberg

Self

La Vernia, TX

I am providing public comment in support of HB 1725. I strongly support restricting delivery of marked ballots to by official mail and not counting any ballots hand delivered by anyone. I would like to see how compliance will be monitored on the receipt side of the ballots to the voting clerk, meaning will ballots only be counted when received by the U.S. Mail, and/or what does 'common or contract carriers' mean and how voting clerks will document what 'bonafide' carrier delivered to them, and ensure it is not just someone who is harvesting ballots. How would a voting clerk check for compliance and record the identity and bonafide business information at receipt by a common/contract carrier and would the ballots be considered 'provisional' until verified to be in compliance with acceptable delivery receipt? Or, is it possible to remove 'common/contract carriers' as a lawful method of delivery and keep it only to be by U.S. Mail?

Roberta Dobie

Self

Three Rivers, TX

All ballots should be returned by mail to ensure tracking of the ballot.

---

Judith Balch

Self-Retired School Counselor

La Grange, TX

I am opposed to HB 1725. In the 2020 election I completed an application to vote by mail, received a ballot, filled it out and returned the ballot to the Elections Administrator in person. When I delivered my ballot I was required to present my ID just as I would if I had voted on Election Day. Evidence of my voting was recorded in the computerized data base just as if I had voted on Election Day. I don't understand the objection to voting in any manner that is verifiable and legitimate especially if it allows more people to vote in a free and fair manner.

---

Skyler Korgel

Self, Manufacturing Engineer

Weatherford, TX

I am against/opposed to HB 1725.

Hand delivery of ballots by mail is an essential option for ensuring a mail voter's vote is received and accepted by a county elections administrator, especially given the substantial issues the post office incurred in response to the COVID-19 pandemic along with the lack of a mail ballot tracking system in the vast majority of counties, leaving mail voters wondering about the fate of their ballot after it leaves their mailbox. Hand delivery of a ballot by mail to a county election office by the voter themselves needs to remain in place.

I urge the committee to not report HB 1725 out of committee or vote nay on the House floor if reported out.

---